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NSC BRIEFING

27 April 1955

SOUTH VIETNAM

I. Tension remains high in Saigon as Diem moves to bring Binh Xuyen-controlled national police under his control.

A. Government strategy is to establish new headquarters under loyal chief and direct all policemen to report to him.

B. This procedure designed to avert charge that government going out of way to make trouble.

1. Diem claims Bao Dai was given prior notification; merely advised Diem not to cause disorders.
2. Immediate Binh Xuyen response to Diem move was nonviolent, limited to appeal to Bao Dai and simultaneous threat to "go underground."
3. Currently, Bao Dai threatening to "take action" momentarily regarding general situation but sort of action undefined, characterized by spokesman as "no more than minimum necessary to avoid immediate explosion."

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- C. Government reluctant to force issue of physical control of old police headquarters, which located in heart of European sector. However, may cut off utilities.
- D. French believe move may not lead to trouble.
 - 1. They will use "any influence they have" to persuade Binh Xuyen not to resort to arms.
 - 2. Believe Binh Xuyen hopes Diem "fall like ripe fruit, without Binh Xuyen having to shake tree."
 - 3. Existence some anti-Binh Xuyen feeling among police confirmed by US embassy security officer.
- II. Government anticipates early rallying of a Viet Minh battalion left over in Camau area, with resultant psychological boost to progovernment cause.
 - A. Viet Minh battalion chief claims 7,000 followers, but government thinks more likely figure is about 1,000.
- III. Diem apparently has no intention of relinquishing his premiership without a fight.
 - A. Apparently going forward with plans for an elected assembly.

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